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Małgorzata Fabiszak

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7089-7939>
Faculty of English, Adam Mickiewicz University Poznań

Anna Weronika Brzezińska

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8217-7608>
Institute of Anthropology and Ethnology, Adam Mickiewicz University Poznań

Patryk Dobkiewicz

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8868-2987>
Faculty of English, Adam Mickiewicz University Poznań

SHIFTING BORDERS – SHIFTING LANGUAGES: INVESTIGATING THE COMMEMORATIVE CITYSCAPE IN POZNAŃ AND SŁUBICE*

Abstract

This article explores patterns of street renaming in two locations which over the last century were interchangeably controlled by Germany and Poland: Posen/Poznań and Dammvorstadt/Słubice. It examines how changes in the language of administration influenced their urban streetscape. The results demonstrate that there are several different semantic categories of street names which show varied affinity to change. Commemorative street names inscribing personal names are most prone to alteration, while those based on toponymy and landmarks are often translated from one language to another and retain their meaning. Street names based on place names are a heterogeneous category with directional names showing more stability than those which represent the national geographical imagery.

Keywords: collective memory; commemoration; critical toponymy; ideology; language planning policy; linguistic landscape; street renaming

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I INTRODUCTION

Street names are specific sites of interaction of history, language and culture in the urban landscape. They have been investigated within a number of research traditions originating in linguistic landscape studies, critical toponymy, sociology and onomastics. The earliest street names were purely informative in nature, as in *ulica Szewska* ‘Shoemakers’ Street’ – a street where shoemakers’ workshops were situated, *ulica Wroniecka* – a street leading to the town of Wronki (*Wroniecka* being an adjective of the proper noun *Wronki*), or *ulica Dominikańska* ‘Dominican Street’ – a street where the Dominican Church is located. In the nineteenth century a new trend of commemorative street naming emerged, when the names of famous kings and generals were inscribed in the city landscape to mark their hegemony.¹ As a result, when the official dominant ideology or state affiliation of a given city changed, the local community and administration would erase the names of historical figures and events representing the former regime and imprint those that express their system of values. This overwriting of the old with the new national or political *Weltanschauung* is typical of the post-colonial context, for example in urban centres of Cameroon; in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe; Cairo, Egypt; Oran, Algeria; New Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata in India and in Singapore.² In the European

¹ Paweł Anders, *Patroni wielkopolskich ulic* (Poznań, 2006); Kwirynd Handke, ‘Konstrukcja i dekonstrukcja systemu nazewnictwa miejskiego w polskich miastach’, in Irena Sarnowska-Giefing and Magdalena Graf (eds), *Miasto w perspektywie onomastyki i historii* (Poznań, 2010), 357–72; Antoni Gąsiorowski, ‘Nazwy poznańskich ulic. Przemiany i trwanie: wieki XIV–XX’, *Kronika Miasta Poznania*, lili, 3–4 (1984), 23–64.

² Liora Bigon and Ambe J. Njoh, ‘Toponymic Complexities in Sub-Saharan African Cities: Informative and Symbolic Aspects from Past to Present’, in Reuben Rose-Redwood, Derek Alderman and Maoz Azaryahu (eds), *The Political Life of Urban Streetscapes. Naming, Politics and Place* (London, 2018), 202–17; Liora Bigon and Michel Ben Arrous, ‘Les noms de rues à Dakar: Héritages (pre)-coloniaux et temps présent’, *Bulletin de l’IFAN Ch. A. Diop*, lix, 1–2 (2019), 53–79; Liketso Dube ‘Naming and Renaming of the Streets and Avenues of Bulawayo: A Statement to the Vanquished by the Victors?’, *Nomina Africana*, xxxii, 2 (2018), 47–55; Priyanka Ghosh, ‘Street and Place Name Changes in Kolkata: India’s First Modern City’, in Stanley D. Brunn and Roland Kehrein (eds), *Handbook of the Changing World Language Map* (Cham, 2020), 2023–35; Fadila Kettaf, ‘Pour une “aventure” des noms des places d’Oran (Algérie)’, *Cybergeo: European Journal of Geography* (2017), <http://journals.openedition.org/cybergeo/28835>; Yoram Meital, ‘Central

context, the most recent wave of blanket changes in street naming took place during the post-communist transformation, as illustrated by case studies of Berlin, Bucharest, Budapest, Moscow, Kyiv, Pristina and Warsaw.³ In Poland, extensive street renaming was investigated, in particular, with respect to the Polonisation of toponymy in the Western and Northern Territories that Poland gained after the Second World War⁴ as well as in the post-Transformation period in the 1990s.⁵

Cairo: Street Naming and the Struggle over Historical Representation’, *Middle East Studies*, xliii, 6 (2007), 857–78; Rani Rubdy, ‘Patterns of Commemorative Street and Place Renaming in India’s Two Mega-cities: Mumbai and New Delhi’, *Linguistics Vanguard*, vii, 5 (2021), 1–11, <https://doi.org/10.1515/lingvan-2021-0018>; Brenda Yeoh, ‘Street Names in Colonial Singapore’, *Geographical Review*, lxxxii, 3 (1992), 313–22; Brenda Yeoh, ‘Street-naming and Nation-guiding: Toponymic Inscriptions of Nationhood in Singapore’, in Lawrence D. Berg and Jani Vuolteenaho, *Critical Toponymies. The Contested Politics of Place Naming* (London–New York, 2016), 71–84.

³ Maoz Azaryahu, ‘The Power of Commemorative Street Names: The Case of East Berlin’, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, xiv, 3 (1996), 311–30; Uranela Demaj and Mieke Vandenbroucke, ‘Post-war Kosovo Landscapes in Pristina: Discrepancies between Language Policy and Urban Reality’, *Nationalities Papers*, xlv, 5 (2016), 804–25; Kenneth Foote, Attila Toth and Anett Arvey, ‘Hungary after 1989: Inscribing a New Past on Place’, *Geographical Review*, xc (1999), 301–33; Duncan Light, ‘Street Names in Bucharest, 1990–1997: Exploring the Modern Historical Geographies of Post-Socialist Change’, *Journal of Historical Geography*, xxx (2004), 154–72; Jerzy Majewski, *Warszawa nieodbudowana. Żydowski Muranów i okolice* (Warszawa, 2012); Emilia Palonen, ‘The City-Text in Post-Communist Budapest: Street Names, Memorials and the Politics of Commemoration’ *GeoJournal* lxxiii (2008), 219–30; Aneta Pavlenko, ‘Linguistic Landscape of Kyiv, Ukraine: A Diachronic Study’, in Elana Shohamy, Monica Barni and Eliezer Ben Rafael (eds), *Linguistic Landscape in the City* (Bristol, 2010), 133–50; Marian Sloboda, ‘State Ideology and Linguistic Landscape: A Comparative Analysis of (Post)communist Belarus, Czech Republic and Slovakia’, in Elana Shohamy and Durk Gorter (eds), *Linguistic Landscape: Expanding the scenery* (London, 2009), 173–88.

⁴ Monika Choroś and Łucja Jarczak, ‘Tendencje w nazewnictwie ulic Opola w latach powojennych’, in Michał Lis, Kazimierz Szczzygielski and Leokadia Drożdż (eds), *Województwo opolskie 1950–2010* (Opole 2011), 202–22; Jerzy Grzelak, ‘Nazewnictwo ulic Szczecina w okresie 1945–1990 jako narzędzie formowania nowej postępowej świadomości społecznej’, in Sarnowska-Giefing and Graf (eds), *Miasto*, 337–356; Marek Ordyłowski, ‘Walka o polskie nazwy wrocławskich ulic’, in Joanna Nowosielska-Sobel, Grzegorz Strauchold, and Wojciech Kucharski (eds), *Nazwa dokumentem przeszłości regionu: tom poświęcony Wielkiemu Profesorowi Stanisławowi Rospondowi* (Wrocław 2010), 291–300; Gregor Thum, *Uprooted: How Breslau Became Wrocław During the Century of Expulsions* (Princeton, 2011).

⁵ Bartłomiej Różycki, ‘Przemianowywanie ulic w Polsce 1989–2016. Charakterystyka zagadnienia’, in Andrzej Dubicki, Magdalena Rekcś and Andrzej

Our paper follows this tradition, focusing on the Polonisation of toponymy. We researched street renaming motivated by the change in state affiliation and language of administration. What differentiates our contribution from earlier studies is its temporal and geographical scope. Previous research focused on single cases of renamed streets, commemoration of historical figures⁶ or on particular waves of renaming. We compare three waves of street name changes at crucial points in the history of the investigated location related to the shift in state affiliation. With respect to the geographical scope, we go beyond investigating only the most symbolically charged areas of the city⁷ and include all street names in the examined locations at the analysed points in time. As a result, we consider a broad variety of street name types, unlike studies that focus mostly on the turnover of personal names.⁸ Our study material comes from two locations: Poznań/Posen and Słubice/Dammvorstadt. Poznań was a Polish city since its establishment until the second partition of Poland in 1793, when it became part of Prussia and renamed Posen, with German as the official language. After the First World War and following the Greater Poland Uprising of 1918–19 [*powstanie wielkopolskie*] it became part of newly-independent Poland. In 1939–45 the city was

Sepkowski (eds), *W kręgu wyobrażeń zbiorowych: Polityka – władza – społeczeństwo* (Łódź, 2019), 145–72; Elżbieta Hałas, ‘Polityka symboliczna i pamięć zbiorowa. Zmiany nazw ulic po komunizmie’, in Mirosława Marody (ed.), *Zmiana czy stagnacja? Społeczeństwo polskie po czterech latach transformacji* (Warszawa, 2004), 128–52; Ewa Kaltenberg-Kwiatkowska, ‘Pamięć w przestrzeni miasta: wprowadzanie i wymazywanie “zapisów”’, in Józef Styk and Małgorzata Dziekanowska, *Pamięć jako kategoria rzeczywistości społecznej* (Lublin, 2012); Ewa Kaltenberg-Kwiatkowska, ‘O znaczeniu i naznaczaniu przestrzeni miasta’, *Przegląd Socjologiczny*, lx, 2/3 (2011), 135–65; Florian Zieliński, ‘Szata ideologiczna miasta. O przemianowywaniu ulic i placów’, in Ewa Kaltenberg-Kwiatkowska (ed.), *Miasta polskie w dwusetlecie prawa o miastach* (Warszawa, 1994), 189–99.

⁶ Derek Alderman and Joshua Inwood, ‘Street Naming and the Politics of Belonging: Spatial Injustices in the Toponymic Commemoration of Martin Luther King, Jr.’, in Rose-Redwood, Alderman, and Azaryahu (eds) *The Political Life of Urban Streetscapes*, 259–73.

⁷ Brett Chloupek, ‘Public Memory and Political Street Names in Košice: Slovakia’s Multiethnic Second City’, *Journal of Historical Geography*, lxiv (2019), 25–35; Danielle Drozdzewski, ‘Locating the Geopolitics of Memory in the Polish Streetscape’, in Rose-Redwood, Alderman, and Azaryahu (eds), *The Political Life*, 114–31.

⁸ Elżbieta Hałas, ‘Polityka symboliczna i pamięć zbiorowa. Zmiany nazw ulic po komunizmie’, in Marody (ed.), *Zmiana czy stagnacja?*, 128–52.

under Nazi occupation, which ended with the Soviet Army conquering the city on 23 February 1945. Słubice was a part of Frankfurt (Oder) in Germany before 1945, when it became part of the Western and Northern Territories in Poland.

The changes of street names in the historical context of recurring changes in state affiliation mentioned above, raise a number of research questions:

- (1) Which semantic categories of street names are most prone to change?
- (2) Did the Nazi administration return to the same street names as before 1919? If not, what were the differences?
- (3) Did the communist Polish administration return to the same street names as before 1939? If not, what were the differences?
- (4) Did the changes of street names in Słubice post-1945 follow similar patterns of change to those in Poznań post-1945?

II

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Our data includes street name lists, historical maps and literature (for details see the Appendix). Street names were copied into a matrix table with rows for streets and columns for years and then coded with respect to their semantic categories. On this basis we have formulated the following categories⁹:

- **Topological**, relating to the shape or location of the street, e.g. *Bachstrasse* > *ul. Strumykowa* ‘Stream Street’, *Breitstrasse* > *ul. Wielka* ‘Large Street’ (*ul.* – abbreviation of *ulica* ‘street’);
- **Nature-related**, names of birds, animals, plants, e.g. *Kiebitzstrasse* > *ul. Czajcza* ‘Lapwing Street’;
- **Place-name related**, e.g. *Warschauerstrasse* > *ul. Warszawska* ‘Warsaw Street’;
- **Personal names**, e.g. *Bismarckstrasse* (1815–98, Prussian politician, first chancellor of unified Germany) > *ul. Kantaka* (Kazimierz Kantak, 1824–86, political activist, born and died in Poznań);

⁹ The categories used in our study emerged bottom-up from the data, which is a regular procedure for data analysis in grounded theory, see Earl Babbie, *The Basics of Social Research* (Boston, 2017), 393.

- **Saints' Names**, a subgroup of personal names, e.g. *ul. św. Barbary* 'St. Barbara's Street';
- **Dates**, e.g. *ul. 27 Grudnia* '27 of December Street' (the outbreak of the Greater Poland Uprising 1919);
- **Artisans**, usually of medieval origin in the Old Town, related to the trades performed in a given street, e.g. *Bäckerstrasse* > *ul. Piekary* 'Baker's Street';
- **Landmark**, e.g. *Bahnhofstrasse* > *ul. Dworcowa* 'Railway Street';
- **Military** is a subgroup of the landmark category, it has been singled out as Poznań was a city fortress since 1828, e.g. *Festungsstrasse* > *ul. Forteczna* 'Fortress Street';
- **Generic**, names relating to social positions in general, e.g. *Burggrafenring* 'Counts' Ring Road', *ulica Starościńska* 'Government Officer's Street' (from *starosta*, noun > *starościńska*, adjective);
- **Ethnic**, names related to ethnic groups, e.g. *ul. Kurpiowska* (Kurpie, an ethnic region in Poland with a distinct tradition, *Kurpie*, proper name, *kurpiowski/a*, adjective fem./masc.);
- **Values**, names of abstract concepts such as *plac Wolności* 'Freedom Square'.

The second step of our analysis was to code the street renaming as direct translation or change in the denotation of the name. What we call direct translations are typical cases like *Bahnhofstrasse* translated into *ul. Dworcowa* 'Railway Station Street', but also when the denotation of a personal or place name is retained, but the language is changed, as in *Bukerstrasse* changing into *ul. Bukowska* (street leading to the town of Buk). Changes in denotation can be exemplified by *Bismarckstrasse* changing into *ul. Kantaka*, when a Prussian politician is replaced by a Polish one, but also when *Colombstrasse* (named after Prussian general von Colomb) is changed into *ul. Towarowa* 'Cargo Street'. The third step consisted in a quantitative analysis of dominant patterns of renaming.

Finally, it is important to mention that Poznań underwent three changes in the language of administration in 1919, 1939 and 1945, while Dammvorstadt/Słubice underwent only one change in 1945. Additionally, the number of streets in Poznań increased from 315 to 995 streets between 1919 and 1946, while in Słubice it increased from 42 to 68. This disproportion is reflected in the amount of space devoted to each of the cities in the analytic sections below.

III SEMANTIC CATEGORIES OF STREET NAMES AND THEIR AFFINITY TO CHANGE

In this section we focus on the quantitative analysis of semantic categories of street names in Poznań under German- and Polish-language administrations. Table 1 below presents the number of streets classified into each semantic category for 1919, 1921, 1938, 1939, 1944, and 1946.

Table 1. Number of street names in the semantic categories in Poznań in 1919, 1921, 1938, 1939, 1944, 1946.

Semantic category	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Ger 1919	Pol 1921	Pol 1938	Ger 1939	Ger 1944	Pol 1946
Personal name	106	97	161	305	347	210
Topological	55	66	111	47	67	128
Place names	46	50	210	215	321	386
Landmark	50	45	70	63	61	64
Military	13	15	22	18	15	21
Artisans	14	15	22	13	17	25
Generic	11	5	38	22	28	37
Saint's name	9	6	14	5	8	15
Nature	9	9	87	62	118	83
Ethnic	0	0	7	5	7	10
Date	0	2	3	0	0	4
Values	0	2	4	2	1	2
Miscellaneous	2	4	12	4	5	9
Total	315	315	761	761	995	995

Source: Patryk Dobkiewicz, Anna Weronika Brzezińska, and Małgorzata Fabiszak, 2022, *Street name changes in Poznań, Ślubice and Zbąszyń, Poland 1916–2018*, CLARIN-PL digital repository, <http://hdl.handle.net/11321/908> [Accessed: 5 Dec. 2022].

Table 1 presents the frequency of different semantic categories of street names during Polish and German administrations. The information in the table should be read in adjacent columns: 1–2, 3–4, 5–6, so that it is possible to compare the frequency of particular semantic categories between German and Polish administration after the

First World War, during the Nazi occupation of Poznań and after the Second World War. The categories of data have been ordered according to their decreasing frequency in 1919 and 1921. In this period street names derived from personal names and place names, as well as topological and landmark names were most frequent. The remaining categories are represented by small numbers and will not be analysed further. For the years 1938, 1939, 1944, and 1946 an additional category emerged as reasonably numerous: nature-related names. These five most numerous categories will be further analysed with respect to their affinity to change.

The bottom row of Table 1 does not only show the total number of street names in a given period, but also represents the expansion of the city in the analysed periods. Such expansion is usually the effect of incorporating neighbouring villages into the city administration and the development of housing estates in these new outskirts. In interwar Poznań, the number of streets more than doubled, from 315 to 761. During the much shorter period of Nazi occupation the number of streets increased again, this time by 234. These developments will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

When it comes to the correlation between semantic categories and affinity to change, earlier analyses of street name changes¹⁰ have shown that street names commemorating historical figures and place names are most prone to change, while topological, landmark and nature-related street names are most stable in the time of political transformations. A cursory look at Table 1 shows that the number of street names in the “prone to change” categories decreased slightly under Polish administration post-First World War, and the number of street names in the “stable” group increased. It may suggest that while the “ideological cloak” of the city¹¹ has been swapped from commemorating historical personages important for the German national worldview to those representing the Polish national worldview, the size

¹⁰ Kwiryna Handke, ‘Konstrukcja i dekonstrukcja systemu nazewnictwa miejskiego w polskich miastach’, in Sarnowska-Gieffing and Graf (eds) *Miasto*, 357–72; Gašiorowski, ‘Nazwy poznańskich ulic’, 23–64; Jani Vuolteenaho and Guy Puzey, ‘The Political Life of Urban Streetscapes: Naming, Politics, and Place’, in Rose-Redwood, Alderman, and Azaryahu (eds), *The Political Life of Urban Streetscapes*, 74–97.

¹¹ Florian Zieliński, ‘Szata ideologiczna miasta. O przemianowywaniu ulic i placów’, in Kaltenberg-Kwiatkowska (ed.), *Miasta polskie*, 189–99.

of the cloak (i.e. the number of streets that are ideologically marked) has actually decreased. During the Nazi period we notice a doubling of the number of street names commemorating historical personages at the cost of topological and landmark streets. It is clear that an ideological imprint on the streetscape was particularly strong in this period. After the Second World War, when the Polish administration took over the city, the number of street names based on personal names decreased roughly by 1/3. At the same time the number of topological street names almost doubled. This suggests that the communist administration of Poznań in 1946 was less focused on redoing the ‘ideological cloak’ of the city than the Nazi administration preceding it. Now let’s take a closer look at the selected categories and see which of them are most prone to change.

Table 2. Poznań: Translation (TR) and change (CH) by semantic category.

Semantic category	into Polish in 1921		into German in 1939		into Polish in 1946	
	CH	TR	CH	TR	CH	TR
Personal names	98 (92%)	8 (8%)	158 (98%)	3 (2%)	340 (98%)	7 (2%)
Place names	16 (35%)	30 (65%)	152 (72%)	58 (28%)	262 (82%)	59 (18%)
Topological	16 (29%)	39 (71%)	80 (72%)	31 (28%)	35 (52%)	32 (48%)
Landmark	16 (32%)	34 (68%)	32 (46%)	37 (53%)	30 (49%)	31 (51%)
Nature	---	---	56 (64%)	31 (36%)	92 (78%)	26 (22%)

Source: Patryk Dobkiewicz, Anna Weronika Brzezińska, and Małgorzata Fabiszak, 2022, *Street name changes in Poznań, Słubice and Zbąszyń, Poland 1916–2018*, CLARIN-PL digital repository, <http://hdl.handle.net/11321/908> [Accessed: 5 Dec. 2022].

An analysis of the data in Table 2 allows us to create three chains of semantic categories with a decreasing affinity to change for the three points in time, as represented in Table 3.

Table 3. Semantic categories arranged in order of decreasing affinity to change.

Year of change	Order of change
1921	personal names > place names > landmark > topological
1939	personal names > place names / topological > nature > landmark
1946	personal names > place names / nature > topological / landmark

As shown in Tables 2 and 3, our results confirm the claim made in the earlier qualitative studies that street names based on personal names are most prone to change. Yet, contrary to the earlier observations,¹² street names based on place names do not show a markedly different affinity to change in comparison to topological names in 1939 or nature names in 1946. There may be two possible explanations for this discrepancy. First, the earlier studies focused on the street renamings caused by a change of ideology within a given country. In our case study of Poznań, however, both the dominant ideology and the language of administration changed. Second, street names based on place names is a heterogeneous category consisting of two subgroups of potentially different affinity to change. The so-called directional street names, like *Bukerstrasse/ul. Bukowska* (street leading to the town of Buk) mentioned before, are more stable, as they anchor the streetscape in the region by pointing to the connections to other locations. The second subgroup of street names based on place names are geographical names which paint the national geographical imagery, such as *ul. Dniestrzańska* ('River Dniester Street') which was changed into *Oderstrasse* ('River Oder Street') in 1939. In this case Dniester, a river of historical importance for the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth of the sixteenth–eighteenth centuries was replaced by the Oder, which at the time was a Germany-internal river. This group of place names contributes to the construction of national identity and a sense of historical continuity, so they are more likely to change when the state affiliation of a given city changes.

Table 1 and 2 have a limited time depth, allowing for the analysis of one wave of change only, yet as Maoz Azaryahu observes, renaming streets during regime changes is “a measure of history revision” which can take two forms: (1) “de-commemoration”, an erasure of street names representing the previous vision of history and “commemoration” of the version of the past favoured by those who gained control over the territory, and (2) “de-commemoration” and “re-commemoration, ... the reinstatement of names that had been

¹² Jani Vuolteenaho and Guy Puzey, “Armed with an Encyclopaedia and an Axe”: the socialist and post-socialist street toponymy of East Berlin revisited through Gramsci’, in Rose-Redwood, Alderman and Azaryahu (eds), *The Political Life of Urban Streetscapes*, 74–97.

removed by the former regime”.¹³ To observe the latter process, we need to expand our analysis and not only compare the street names of 1938 with 1939, but also those of 1939 with those from 1919 used by the Prussian administration. Also, for the changes in 1946, we need to go beyond 1944 and compare them with 1938 as well. In this way we will be able to answer research questions (2) and (3).

IV CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN THE STREETScape: COMMEMORATION AND RE-COMMEMORATION

In this section we will take a broader historical perspective on street name changes. When the Polish administration took over Poznań after the First World War and the Greater Poland Uprising, all streets in the city had official German names. The task of the city council was to translate these names into Polish or to change them. The Nazi administration of 1939 and the Polish administration of 1946 were faced with slightly different situations. In 1939 there were two groups of streets – one which had been part of the city already in 1919 and at that time had Prussian names, and another, which had been added in the interwar period and had only a history of Polish names. The Nazi administration had the choice of re-commemorating historical events and figures inscribed into the streetscape by the Prussian administration, that is they could return to the pre-1921 Prussian names, or commemorating a new set of figures that would reflect their own ideology rather than that of the monarchy. Similarly, the Polish administration of 1946 encountered two types of streets – those that had Polish names in 1939 (both those renamed in 1921 and added during the interwar period) and another group added during the Nazi occupation that only had German names. Again, the Polish city council had a choice of either returning to the pre-war Polish names for the first set of streets or commemorate their own, this time, communist heroes.

We will first compare Prussian street names from 1919 with Nazi street names of 1939, focusing on the four most frequent semantic categories; see Table 4 below.

¹³ Maoz Azaryahu, ‘Naming the Past: The Significance of Commemorative Street Names’, in Lawrence D. Berg and Jani Vuolteenaho, *Critical Toponymies. The Contested Politics of Place Naming* (Abington–New York, 2016), 53–70.

Table 4. Change and continuation (cont.) with respect to the Prussian street names of 1919 in street names by Nazi administration in Poznań in 1939.

Semantic category of Prussian street names in 1919	Change	Cont.	Total
Personal name	69 (53%)	62 (47%)	131
Topological	10 (23%)	34 (77%)	44
Place name	37 (64%)	21 (36%)	58
Landmark	8 (21%)	31 (79%)	39
Total	124 (46%)	148 (54%)	272

Source: Patryk Dobkiewicz, Anna Weronika Brzezińska, and Małgorzata Fabiszak, 2022, *Street name changes in Poznań, Słubice and Zbąszczyń, Poland 1916–2018*, CLARIN-PL digital repository, <http://hdl.handle.net/11321/908> [Accessed: 5 Dec. 2022].

Table 4 shows how many of the Prussian street names of 1919 that were classified in the 4 semantic categories were changed, and how many continued in use when the Nazis took over the administration of Poznań. The quantitative analysis shows that topological and landmark related street names remain stable despite an ideological change in the socio-political system from monarchy to Nazism. As for personal names and place names, they do not show a clear tendency to change, as personal names did in the case of change from German to Polish administration in 1921. Yet they do not show a tendency to remain stable as roughly half of these names were changed. Clearly, the Nazi administration did not see themselves as a simple continuation of the Prussian rule in Poznań, but felt a need to mark the new Nazi German ideology in the cityscape. Who, then, were the new historical figures worthy of commemoration?

They fall into several categories. Some are personages from earlier historical periods such as Martin Opitz (seventeenth c. poet who promoted writing poetry in German), others are outstanding German artists, scientists from the nineteenth c., e.g. Karl Friedrich Schinkel (1781–1841, Prussian architect, city planner, and painter), Franz Seraph Lenbach (1836–1904, German portrait painter), Heinrich Gotthard Freiherr von Treitschke (1834–1896, German historian, political writer and National Liberal member of the Reichstag), or Alfred Lothar Wegener (1880–1930, German polar researcher, geophysicist and meteorologist). These can be seen as commemorations motivated by a positive national pride. Yet there were many renamings which aimed

at strengthening the militaristic image of the German nation, ranging from the commemoration of Hermann Balk (d. 1239, the Landmeister of the Teutonic Knights), through Andreas Hofer (1767–1810, a hero of resistance against Napoleon) to numerous heroes of the First World War: Graf Spee, Max Immelmann, Oswald Boelcke, Hans Hartwig von Beseler, Gorch Fock, Walter Flex. A large group of commemorated personages were heroes and martyrs of Nazi ideology: Erich Ludendorff, Dietrich Eckart, Horst-Wessel, Vom Rath, Wilhelm Gustloff, Leo-Schlageter, Carl-Hermann Pirscher. Unlike the first six names, Pirscher is of local importance only. He was forced to leave Poznań by Polish soldiers at the onset of the Second World War in a column of *Volksdeutsche* who were marched East; he stayed with the group of people who could no longer walk to accompany his teacher, and was shot by Polish soldiers with the whole group.¹⁴ The Nazis did not shy away from commemorating the living persons, such as Konrad Henlein. One of the city squares was renamed *Heinrichplatz*, as was the whole district. Another district was renamed *Hermannstadt*. Of course they may be seen as just popular German names, but it is quite likely that they refer to Himmler and Goering, respectively.¹⁵ Conspicuously, Poznań did not receive an *Adolf-Hitlers-Allee*, unlike Łódź, Warsaw, or Cracow, but as indicated on Walter Bangert's city rebuilding plan from 1940, it was planned for the main artery of *św. Marcin* ('St Martin Street').¹⁶

As indicated by *Sudetenlandstrasse*, *Cholmerlandstrasse*, *Egerlandstrasse*, or *Memelstrasse*, the Nazi administration, when choosing new place names for street names opted for the territories which had been lost after the Treaty of Versailles and were regained by the Nazis. This is in line with the observation by Vuolteenaho and Puzey, who claim that geographical names used as street names socialize urban populations to the imagery of homeland-making.¹⁷

A comparison of the Polish street names from 1939 with the Polish street names of 1946 yielded surprising results. Only 26 street names were changed. We list some illustrative examples below:

¹⁴ Jakub Skutecki, 'Od Dürera do Pirschera: uwagi o nazwach ulic w okupowanym Poznaniu', *Kronika Miasta Poznania*, lxxvii, 2 (2009), 250.

¹⁵ Gašiorowski, 'Nazwy poznańskich ulic', 45.

¹⁶ Skutecki, 'Od Dürera do Pirschera', 241–52.

¹⁷ Vuolteenaho and Puzey, "Armed with an Encyclopaedia and an Axe", 74–97.

- *ul. Pocztowa* ‘Post Street’ > *ul. 23 Lutego* ‘23rd of February’ (the date of the Red Army’s victory over the Wehrmacht in Poznań);
- *ul. Św. Marcin* ‘St Martin’ > *ul. Czerwonej Armii* ‘the Red Army Street’;
- *ul. Spokojna* ‘Quiet Street’ > *ul. Bolesława Limanowskiego* (Bolesław Limanowski 1835–1935, Polish politician, socialist activist, sociologist and historian);
- *Plac Sapieżyński* ‘Sapieha Square’ [Polish aristocratic family] > *Plac Wielkopolski* ‘Greater Poland Square’ (the name of the region);
- *ul. Podgórna* ‘Uphill Street’ > *ul. Walki Młodych* ‘Youth Struggle’ (Walka Młodych – Polish underground military communist youth organisation).¹⁸

This shows a difference between the takeover of power by the Nazis and by the Communists with respect to the symbolic control over the streetscape. The Nazis came prepared to create a new Model City¹⁹ and changed roughly 40 per cent of the Prussian names in year 1 of their rule. The Communists changed only 26 (3.35 per cent) of the pre-war street names at the very beginning of their rule. The City National Council resolution of 22 October 1945 reads: “The names of districts, streets and squares are restored to those from 1939, with the following changes...”, and the 26 changes mentioned above are listed.

There are two main possible reasons for this. First, there may have been social resistance to change stemming from the fact that only 6 years elapsed between the two waves of renaming, the residents remembered the old street names well, and blanket changes would introduce confusion and could cause popular protests. The second reason can be linked to the insecurity of the communist government, who could only take symbolic control over the city semiotic landscape after they had secured the control of the whole country. This is in fact supported by the renamings in 1951, when a number of communist personages and organizations were added to the streetscape.

¹⁸ The entire corpus of street name changes in Poznań, Słubice and Zbąszyń, Poland 1916–2018 is available at <http://hdl.handle.net/11321/908>.

¹⁹ Aleksandra Paradowska, ‘Architektura, historia i ich propagandowe obrazy w Kraju Warty’, in Karolina Jara and Aleksandra Paradowska (eds), *Urbanistyka i architektura okresu III Rzeszy w Polsce* (Poznań, 2019), 35–66.

V
STREET RENAMING IN A SMALL TOWN
IN THE WESTERN TERRITORIES

Ślubice, as Dammvorstadt, were the outskirts of Frankfurt (Oder) before the end of the Second World War, located on the eastern bank of the Oder River. After the war the Oder, which up to that point had been a Germany-internal river, became a border between (communist) Poland and (communist) East Germany. The eastern bank outskirts became the Polish town of Ślubice. Table 5 below shows the number of street names falling into each semantic category.

Table 5. Number of German and Polish street names by semantic category in Ślubice in 1945.

Semantic category	German street names	Polish street names
Artisan	3	0
Date	0	1
Ethnic	0	1
Generic	2	1
Group	0	4
Landmark	9	3
Military	2	3
Personal name	5	34
Nature	9	4
Place name	21	8
Topological	17	6
Value	0	3
Total	68	68

Source: Patryk Dobkiewicz, Anna Weronika Brzezińska, and Małgorzata Fabiszak, 2022, *Street name changes in Poznań, Ślubice and Zbąszczyń, Poland 1916–2018*, CLARIN-PL digital repository, <http://hdl.handle.net/11321/908> [Accessed: 5 Dec. 2022].

Table 5 presents a comparison of the frequency of various semantic categories of street names in the German Dammvorstadt and Polish Ślubice. It shows that when this municipality was the outskirts of Frankfurt (Oder), directional street names referring to the nearby towns and topological names predominated. This peripheral residential

area, unlike the city centre, had little symbolic importance hence only five historical figures were commemorated here, among them two kings: Friedrich and Leopold, Friedrich Ludwig Jahn – educator and nationalist, and a shoemaker and member of the German parliament from Frankfurt (Oder) a Mr. Faber. For the Polish administration, the outskirts detached from the city centre became a complete symbolic entity which would mark the Polishness of the then so-called Regained Territories [*Ziemie Odzyskane*]. This resulted in the rapid increase of street names commemorating historical figures representing the Polish national pantheon, such as kings (e.g. Mieszko I and Boleslaus the Brave) or poets and artists (e.g. Maria Konopnicka and Frédéric Chopin). As the communists claimed credit for “the return [of these territories] to the motherland”, they also commemorated personages representing their ideology, such as Joseph Stalin, Feliks Dzierżyński (the first leader of the Soviet secret police), Michał Rola-Żymierski (communist party leader and military commander) or collective heroes like the Red Army or the Heroes of Stalingrad. Have any names been retained in this process of reimagining of the German working class outskirts into the last post of the Polish state? Indeed, four street names were translated:

- *Reppenerstrasse* > *ul. Rzepińska* (street leading to the town of Ger. Reppen/Pol. Rzepin),
- *Vorwerksweg* > *ul. Folwarczna* ‘Grange Street’,
- *Wasser Strasse* > *ul. Wodna* ‘Water Street’
- *Dragoner Strasse* > *ul. Podchorążych* ‘Cadets Street’.

Though the last one is an example of a very dynamic translation, it retains the meaning of a military group. It thus seems that in a small town in the newly gained territories the Communist authorities exhibited a disregard for the town’s and its former inhabitants’ past and inscribed an entirely new vision into the streetscape. This is different from the changes not only in Poznań, but also in e.g. Breslau/Wrocław, a large city in the Western and Northern Territories, where German personal names were replaced with Polish personal names, but topological and nature related names were not.²⁰

²⁰ Thum, *Uprooted*.

VI CONCLUSION

Most of the existing literature discusses street renaming in terms of a political change, an overthrowing of one ideological regime and replacing it with another. In this paper not only we analyse such changes at crucial moments of the history of Poznań and Słubice but additionally focus on language shifts following the change in the state affiliation of the analysed locations. The main contribution of this study to critical toponymy and historical geography is the systematic quantitative analysis across several waves of renaming of the entire streetscape of the selected locations. Our research has not been limited to the symbolically potent city centres of state or regional capitals, but included streets in the peripheral districts as well. It put the ideologically motivated changes in a broader perspective and allowed us to investigate both change and continuation in the urban landscape. In addition to our analysis of the entire cityscape of a regional capital, we have also analysed changes of street names in a small border town, which, to our knowledge, has not been done before. This case study is important in so far as it shows that even places of no symbolical value on the national scale may become sites of ideological struggle in moments of state affiliation changes and population transfers.

Our results show that there is a core of street names based on artisan names, landmarks and topology, which continue in a cityscape regardless of the language of administration. These names tend to be translated rather than changed. We have also shown that in such circumstances street names commemorating historical figures are particularly prone to change, as they are “associated with nation-building and the efforts of political elites to cast national identity in the mold of a national history”.²¹ When state border shifts, unlike in case of a political regime change, even the names of poets, scientists and industrialists are wiped out, as they represent different national cultures.²² Contrary to the earlier observations, however, street names based on place names do not show a different affinity to change

²¹ Maoz Azaryahu, ‘Naming the Past’, 56.

²² Isabelle Buchstaller, Małgorzata Fabiszak, Seraphim Alvanides, Patryk Dobkiewicz, Frauke Griese, and Carolin Schneider, ‘Commemorative City-texts: Spatio-temporal Patterns in Street Names in Leipzig, East Germany and Poznań, Poland’ under review for *Language in Society*.

when compared with topological names in 1939 or nature names in 1946. This may be the result of the heterogeneity of the place name category, with directional street names being more stable than those which construct a national geographical imagery within the streetscape.

Finally, we have juxtaposed Poznań, a regional capital with a rich history of both Polish and German presence, with Słubice, a small border town which underwent a total population replacement after it became part of post-war Poland. In Słubice, even the topological and nature-related street names, which in the case of Poznań are seen as relatively stable, were overwritten, with only four pre-war German street names being translated by the Polish post-Second World War administration. The results show that when a new state administration takes control over a foreign territory, it strives to symbolically mark its entirety as their own. Also, the commemorated personages come from the general national pantheon and do not have any connection to the place. Hence they fail to build a sense of belonging in the town's population. This is characteristic of the border regions, where identity is often in flux and where there was a break in intergenerational cultural transfer. The local elites are all migrants from someplace else, and thus are unable to develop a strong local identity politics.

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Małgorzata Fabiszak – critical discourse analysis, collective memory, cognitive linguistics, conceptualisation of emotions, war discourse, conceptual metaphors; professor at the Faculty of English, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań; e-mail: mfabisza@amu.edu.pl

Anna Weronika Brzezińska – cultural heritage, regionalism and regional culture, collective memory in urban and rural landscape, museum studies; professor at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań; e-mail: awbrzez@amu.edu.pl

Patryk Dobkiewicz – critical discourse studies of radical political discourses, interpreting studies, linguistic landscape; PhD student at the Faculty of English, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań; e-mail: patdobl@amu.edu.pl